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ABSTRACT

This document is comprised of one issue of the "State Education Leader," published by the Education Commission of the States, an organization that helps state leaders identify, develop, and implement public policy for education that addresses current and future needs of a learning society. This newsletter issue focuses on the activities driving changes in state policy, including economic concerns, a new national report that graded state higher education systems, President Bush's "No Child Left Behind" initiative, and national test scores. The articles in this issue include: (1) "Economics, Test Scores, New President behind Legislative Changes" (Kathy Christie); (2) "Is the Party Over? Education Spending in Today's Economy" (Mike Griffith); (3) "Tax Credits for Education Gain Credibility" (Todd Ziebarth); (4) "Early Learning: What's New in States" (Kristie Kauerz); (5) "A National Report Card on Teacher Quality" (Ed Crowe); (6) "Higher Education Master Plans Gaining Ground" (John Borgen); (7) "Leadership in the States" (Katy Anthes); (8) "Ohio Partnerships Unite Districts, Universities" (Marga Torrence); (9) "Service-Learning: What's Happening in the States" (Lou Myers); and (10) "Community College Role Growing" (Genevieve Hale). (KB)

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Economics, Test Scores, New President Behind Legislative Changes.

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Education Commission of the States

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STATE EDUCATION leader

EDUCATION COMMISSION OF THE STATES ECS

VOLUME 19 NUMBER 3 FALL 2001

ECONOMICS, TEST SCORES, NEW PRESIDENT BEHIND LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

by Kathy Christie

In the past year, a number of activities drove changes in state policies: economic concerns, a new national report that graded state higher education systems, affirmative action cases, President Bush's "No Child Left Behind" initiative, recommendations concerning the high school senior year, national test scores indicating less than skyrocketing results, growing knowledge of the importance of early learning, major reports on reading research and a growing body of literature touting the value of highly qualified, caring teachers in classrooms. Overall, the policies passed in states ran the gamut, ranging from policies addressing specific aspects of specific issues to broad initiatives aimed at improving whole systems.

Many policies passed during the past year were mundane, yet necessary. Finance bills, for example, covered aspects from funding school facilities to how to pay for special education services. A number of bills concerned with children's health addressed immunizations; others set requirements for storage and application of pesticides near schools. Still others targeted specific behaviors such as requiring school board members to visit classrooms once a year.

Less mundane, another level of policies addressed specific aspects of the education system. For example, the Texas Legislature required research regarding how much time counselors spend counseling and advising, as opposed to scheduling. Several states required

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The mission of the Education Commission of the States (ECS) is to help state leaders identify, develop and implement public policy for education that addresses current and future needs of a learning society.

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state-level models or district policies about preventing bullying or harassment. Others addressed how to track student achievement without using Social Security numbers.

A third level of policy more broadly addressed the system through a mix of comprehensive legislation targeted at broad components of the system or directed specifically at achievement. A great deal of legislative activity centered on teaching quality, accountability, assessment, academic rigor, and the alignment of the pre-K-12 and higher education systems.

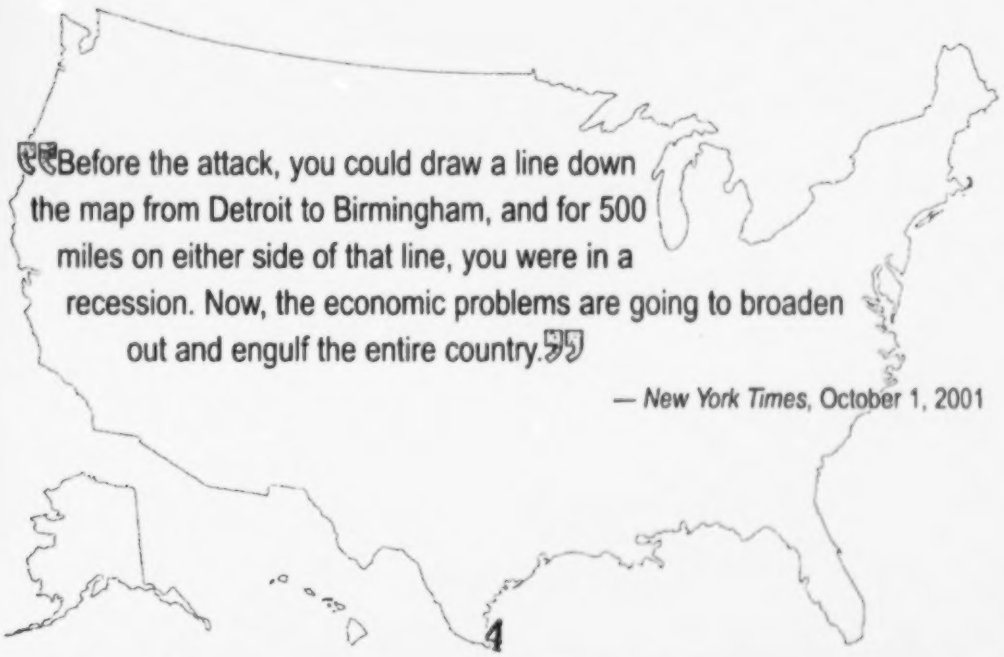
What will drive policy next year?

Over the next 12 months, the following conditions are likely to drive what happens to education policy in state legislatures.

- State economic conditions, particularly in those states dependent on sales tax revenues. These include a push to address the need for economic development, particularly in states where many rural areas are suffering decline. According to Stateline.org, 40 states are experiencing budget problems, ranging from mild to severe, and 15 of those already have made cuts or frozen spending.
- The lack of revenues to undertake expensive reforms, even in states that are economically "healthy." Early childhood initiatives, for example, or broad professional development or major improvement in reading require significant dollars to support.
- A growing body of literature touting the need for leadership in the trenches of districts and schools.
- Discussions about the development of a second generation of accountability systems.
- Growth of the P-16 movement, with its focus on alignment of systems.
- Implementation of the federal "No Child Left Behind" initiative.
- Accountability for results at the higher education level.
- Recommendations from the National Commission on the High School Senior Year that emphasize three areas: achievement, alignment and alternatives.
- A strong push to close the achievement gap.

This issue of *State Education Leader* provides a brief synopsis of major trends over the past year, a review of issues that those trends affect and are affected by, emerging questions and emerging issues.

Christie is ECS vice president for information management and clearinghouse.■


"Before the attack, you could draw a line down the map from Detroit to Birmingham, and for 500 miles on either side of that line, you were in a recession. Now, the economic problems are going to broaden out and engulf the entire country."
— New York Times, October 1, 2001

IS THE PARTY OVER?

EDUCATION SPENDING IN TODAY'S ECONOMY

by Mike Griffith

During the first nine months of this year, the nation's economy began to experience a slowdown in growth, an economic downturn made far worse by the terrorist attacks of September 11. Many individuals now are asking whether the current economic situation will affect state K-12 education spending. The answer is that education spending already has been negatively affected; the question now is how big the impact will be and how long will it last.

Prior to September 11

Over the past five years, state policymakers were in the enviable position of being able to increase education spending and cut taxes at the same time. Now it appears those times are over — at least in the short term.

From 1996 to 2001, per-student expenditures for K-12 education increased by more than 30%, which provided a per-student increase of more than 13% above inflation. These high increases in spending would have been difficult to maintain even in good economic times, and, in fact, were already slowing down prior to September 11.

A report issued in March 2001 by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) noted that 19 states already had cut their FY01 budgets or were on the verge of doing so. Of those states making cuts, only one — Alabama — had cut education spending. Most states were looking at education spending increases for FY02, albeit at a slower rate than in previous years. All that changed, however, on September 11.

A new economic outlook

The states suffering the first economic impacts after the attacks were those that rely heavily on either travel and tourism or energy sectors to drive their economies. The drop in tourism particularly has affected such states as Florida, Hawaii and Nevada, while the decrease in oil prices has hit such states as Alaska, Louisiana and Texas. All states are expected to feel the impact eventually.

Stateline.org, a Web site that reports on state policy issues, surveyed all 50 states and found that 40 have determined they would need to freeze spending or make cuts in their current FY02 budgets prior to the attack. Fifteen states already have decided they will need to make further budget cuts due to the economic impact of September 11.

What does the future hold?

Some states will be able to avoid budget cuts in the short term because they were able to put excess funds into "rainy-day" accounts. In a study released on August 1, NCSL estimated that by the end of FY02, the states would have a combined $19.2 billion in these emergency accounts. These funds, however, are equivalent only to about 10% of yearly state revenue and will be sufficient only in short-term situations, not a protracted economic downturn.

A few states already have been forced to make some difficult decisions about education spending. Iowa, for example, delayed its teacher "pay-for-performance" program, which

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was seen as a possible model for other states. Some states may have to follow North Carolina which chose to increase its sales and income taxes by $1 billion after September 11, so it could go ahead with a planned teacher pay raise. Less than a month after this tax increase, however, state departments were told to reduce their budgets by 4%.

If the economy does not turn around soon, state policymakers will be in the unenviable position of decreasing education spending, increasing taxes or both. It's hard to tell if the party is over or if the band is just taking a break. Either way, no one's going to be dancing any time soon.

Griffith is an ECS policy analyst.

by Todd Ziebarth

TAX CREDITS FOR EDUCATION GAIN CREDIBILITY

Publicly funded vouchers, that is, payments that the government makes to a parent or an institution on a parent's behalf to be used for a child's education expenses, appear to draw the most impassioned responses from the opposing sides of the debate about the use of public money in support of private schools. Over the past five years, however, as policymakers have debated the pros and cons of this heated topic, a similar policy option has gained in prominence in state capitols. From Alaska to West Virginia, governors and state legislators have considered, and occasionally passed, proposals that allow tax breaks for education-related expenses.

As tax credits and tax deductions have been deliberated and implemented in several states, they have taken one of two forms. In the first form, states grant tax credits or tax deductions to parents for their education-related expenses. In the second form, states grant tax credits or tax deductions to persons or groups that contribute money to an organization that then distributes the contributions in the form of student scholarships or public school grants.

Tax breaks to parents

Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota grant tax credits or tax deductions to parents for their education-related expenses. In their 1999 session, Illinois lawmakers enacted legislation granting tax credits to parents of children in public, private or parochial schools. Under the law, parents may reduce their state income tax bill by 25% of whatever they spend for their children's tuition, books and lab fees. To be eligible for the tax credit, parents must spend at least $250, and the tax credit may not exceed $500 per family.

Years ago, in 1955, Minnesota lawmakers enacted a law that allowed parents to claim a tax deduction of up to $200 for tuition and other school expenses. Over the years, state lawmakers have enacted a variety of changes to this law, the most recent of which occurred

in 1997 and 1999. Based on these changes, Minnesota law now permits a tax deduction or up to $1,625 for elementary school expenses and up to $2,500 for secondary school expenses, as well as a refundable tax credit worth up to $1,000 per student or $2,000 per family for families with incomes under $33,500.

In 1987, Iowa policymakers enacted a law that allowed parents to claim a tax deduction of up to $1,000 for each dependent's acceptable education expenses. Taxpayers who did not itemize their deductions were able to take the benefit in the form of a tax credit equal to 5% of the first $1,000 paid for each dependent's acceptable education expenses. Since that time, Iowa policymakers have eliminated the tax deduction and revised the tax credit provision, most recently in 1998, to allow parents to claim a tax credit of up to 25% of the first $1,000 for each dependent's acceptable education expenses.

Tax breaks to organizations and/or individuals for contributions

Arizona, Florida and Pennsylvania grant tax credits or tax deductions to organizations or individuals that contribute money to an organization that then distributes these contributions as student scholarships or public school grants.

In 1997, Arizona policymakers established two nonrefundable individual income tax credits. One allows taxpayers to claim a tax credit of up to $500 for a cash contribution or up to $500 to a nonprofit organization that distributes scholarships or tuition grants to private and parochial schools that do not discriminate on the basis of several characteristics. The other allows taxpayers to claim a tax credit of up to $200 as reimbursement for fees paid to a public school for extracurricular activities.

In 2001, Florida and Pennsylvania created similar policies. In the Sunshine State, policymakers enacted a law to provide a tax credit for corporations that donate money to scholarship-funding organizations. The law requires such organizations to use 100% of contributions for scholarships for children who qualify for the federal free- or reduced-lunch program. Scholarships may be used to cover tuition or textbook expenses for, or transportation to, an eligible nonpublic school or transportation expenses to a public school outside the district in which the student resides.

In 2001, Pennsylvania policymakers enacted a law that creates an education improvement tax credit for corporations that donate money to education improvement scholarship organizations. Education improvement organizations must contribute at least 80% of their annual receipts as grants to public schools for innovative education programs. Scholarship organizations must contribute at least 80% of their annual receipts to programs that will distribute these donations to allow public and nonpublic school children to attend the school of their choice.

Conclusion

Up to this point, tax credits and tax deductions have survived the legal test. Most significantly, Minnesota's original tax deduction program was challenged in court and found to be constitutional. According to the U.S. Supreme Court, the programs had the secular purposes of ensuring that Minnesota's citizenry is well-educated, that private and parochial schools' financial health remains sound, and that the programs did not primarily advance sectarian aims of parochial schools or excessively entangle the state in religion.

With a relatively firm legal basis for tax breaks for education-related expenses, in conjunction with the uncertainty around the constitutionality of publicly funded vouchers, states probably will continue to debate and sometimes enact tax credits and tax deductions. If the U.S. Supreme Court, which is likely to rule on Cleveland's publicly funded voucher program in 2002, ultimately decides that publicly funded vouchers are unconstitutional, the debate around tax credits and tax deductions most likely will increase in intensity and volume.

Ziebarth is ECS program director in charge of governance.

"Up to this point, tax credits and tax deductions have survived the legal test."

EARLY LEARNING: WHAT'S NEW IN STATES

by Kristie Kauerz

> "The challenge facing state and local leaders is to create a system of early learning that promotes options for families, access for children, quality standards for programs and accountability for policymakers."

Across the nation, the emphasis on student achievement has spurred policy efforts around early learning — or the early care and education that occur for children between birth and compulsory school age. Early learning is seen as an important investment in children's future academic success and as a cost-effective means to prevent later delinquency, remediation and other "poor outcomes."

The challenge facing state and local leaders is to create a system of early learning that promotes options for families, access for children, quality standards for programs and accountability for policymakers. Toward this end, trends in policy proposals and provisions over the past year fell into seven primary issues.

1. **Universal Access to Free, Publicly Funded, Voluntary Early Learning Programs**
   Forty-two states have implemented state-funded prekindergarten programs, while all but 11 mandate school districts to offer at least half-day kindergarten programs. Access to these programs primarily has been limited to low-income or otherwise "at-risk" children. States, however, are beginning to expand programs with the ultimate goal of universal access.

   - Two states — Georgia and New York — have pledged universal prekindergarten programs for all 4-year-olds. A number of other states are incrementally working toward universal access.
   - About 70% of Kentucky kindergarten classes have become full day. Indiana recently invested $10 million to create or expand full-day kindergarten in 120 of its 292 districts, accounting for more than half of the state's population.

2. **Improved Program Quality**
   Developing and sustaining high-quality programs are key to ensuring that children achieve positive short- and long-term outcomes and to guaranteeing that families feel confident about their children's safety, care and education.

- Tennessee has implemented a voluntary "three-star" quality rating system for early learning programs. For each star earned, a program will receive increased state subsidization for serving low-income children.
- A state-funded partnership between the New Jersey Department of Human Services and Kean University will provide assistance to early learning programs to help them gain National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation, a generally accepted standard of quality.

3. Coordination of Policy and Programs

More than 30 states have established early learning governance bodies designed to integrate policies of "care" and "education" across various state agencies and programs. Coordinated governance structures not only make efficient use of scarce resources, but also provide increased consistency of children's early learning and development experiences.

- The Texas Legislature recently established an Office of Early Childhood Coordination that collaborates with the Texas Education Agency and is responsible for coordinating health and social service delivery for children under age 6.
- The Washington Partnership links Head Start, pre-kindergarten and child-care programs. Partnership members meet regularly to share updates about service delivery and to conduct cross-training to learn about the concerns and challenges of one another's agencies.

4. Adequate Financial Investment

Adequate funding is essential to ensuring that all children have equitable access to early learning programs. While most states recognize the important role of public investment, the expenditure levels, financing mechanisms and reliance on private funding sources vary. Some states are generating new revenue to support early care and education, while others have developed new strategies for using existing resources.

- Arkansas recently enacted a 3% increase on beer tax, expected to generate $9.6 million for the state-sponsored early childhood education program for low-income children.
- California voters in 1998 approved Proposition 10, which imposed a 50-cents tax on cigarettes and other tobacco products. Funds generated by the tax, which are split between the state and counties, are used to support and improve early childhood programs. Vermont is exploring a similar proposal.
- Georgia's universal pre-kindergarten program for 4-year-olds is funded primarily by state lottery proceeds. North Carolina is exploring a lottery for education.
- Maine, Kansas and Kentucky have allocated some of their states' tobacco settlement funds to early care and education initiatives.

5. Improved Staff Training and Professional Development

It is widely recognized that staff and teachers working with young children have a major impact on children's early learning and development. Staff who have more formal education and more specialized early childhood training are better equipped to help children succeed. As early learning programs expand in states, recruitment and retention of qualified teachers increasingly will become a major challenge.

- Seventeen states offer the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Project, a scholarship program that encourages early learning teachers to attain additional training and education by paying a large proportion of the costs and by awarding additional compensation upon completion.
- The Colorado Legislature recently enacted a loan-forgiveness program for early learning teachers. Participants are eligible for two years of loan forgiveness for loans incurred while completing a child development associate degree at a community college.

6. Appropriate Assessment for Measuring School Readiness

Many state policymakers are interested in using assessment and evaluation strategies to measure school readiness. Used appropriately, early childhood assessments can support children's learning, identify children's special needs, evaluate and monitor programs, and make programs accountable.

- North Carolina is implementing the state's first kindergarten readiness assessment. With no child-specific information, the data will help the state determine the degree to which children are prepared for

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"Adequate funding is essential to ensuring that all children have equitable access to early learning programs."

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school along various dimensions such as health and physical development, social and emotional development, approaches toward learning, language and communications development, and cognitive and general learning.

- The Kansas School Readiness Committee has proposed school readiness indicators in four major areas — child, family, school and community — to help determine school success for children.

7. Parent and Public Engagement

Parents are the first and primary educators of young children. Despite demographic changes in both nuclear and extended family structures, policymakers are dedicated to keeping parents central in their children's early years. Many states are working to include business, media and other community organizations in early learning efforts.

- Pennsylvania recently launched an "I Am Your Child" campaign to raise public awareness and to educate parents and the general public about the critical importance of the early years of a child's life. All parents of newborns in the state will be able to order free education videos, a "Pennsylvania Guide for Families" and a book for their child.
- Indiana established the Business Partnership Specialist Project, designed to encourage private-sector leadership on early learning issues.

For additional information on states' early learning efforts, visit the Early Childhood and Kindergarten Issue Site at www.ecs.org.

Kauerz is ECS program director for early childhood.

Correction

A co-author was inadvertently omitted from the article, "Facing Janus: Leadership in Early Care and Education," in the Summer 2001 edition of *State Education Leader.* That article was written by Sharon Lynn Kagan, distinguished professor at Teachers College, Columbia University, and ECS Distinguished Senior Fellow, as well as Lynda Hallmark, research assistant, Teachers College, Columbia University. ECS regrets the oversight.

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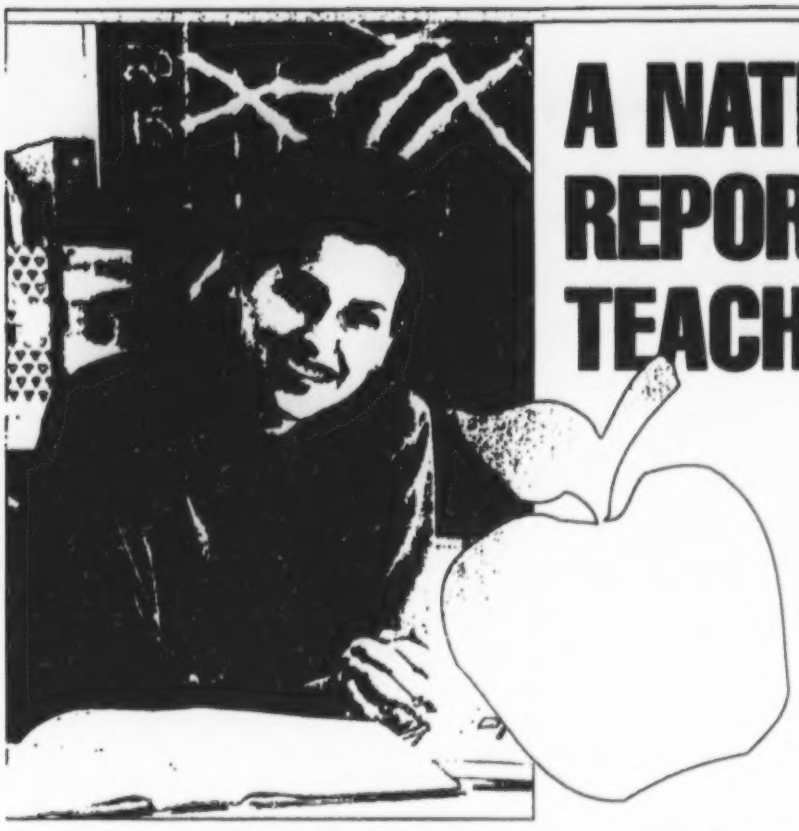

A NATIONAL REPORT CARD ON TEACHER QUALITY

by Ed Crowe

A new era in accountability began when Congress created a "report card" on teacher quality in 1998. For the first time, this national reporting system made information about teacher preparation programs and policies available to state officials and to the public. For state leaders, these institutional report cards and comprehensive state reports about teacher quality can be tools for better understanding the issues and implementing more effective reform.

The "report card" was enacted along with the Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement Program, which provides grants to states and school-university partnerships to improve teacher preparation. It requires every higher education institution with a teacher education program to report on pass rates and other program-specific information to its state. States, in turn, are obligated to make annual reports to the U.S. Department of Education. And the U.S. secretary of education must report to Congress each year on the state of teacher preparation in the country.

The reporting system

The Title II reporting system operates on an annual cycle. By April 7 of each year — starting in 2001 — **colleges and universities with teacher preparation programs** must provide the following information to their state:

- ☐ Pass rates of students completing the program
- ☐ Basic program features (number of students, how much supervised practice teaching is required, student-faculty ratio in practice teaching)
- ☐ Whether the program has been classified as "low performing" by the state
- ☐ Supplemental data offering relevant contextual information about the program.

Institutions also must disclose this information to the public, both on request and through publications sent to potential applicants, guidance counselors or persons who might employ program graduates. About 1,300 teacher preparation programs provided information in the first round of institutional reports last April.

States must report by October 7 each year the following information to the U.S. Department of Education:

- ☐ State licensure and certification requirements
- ☐ Descriptions of alternate routes to certification

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- Pass rates for licensure or certification candidates — statewide, by institution and for each alternate route
- Institutional rankings by licensure pass rates
- Information on waivers granted to state licensure or certification requirements — including the percent of teachers on waivers in high- and low-poverty school districts
- Criteria the state uses to assess the performance of teacher preparation programs.

For the current year, the first set of annual state reports was due in Washington, D.C., on October 8, 2001.

The third component of the Title II system is the **Secretary's Report to Congress**. The first of these is due on Capitol Hill by April 8, 2002. It will contain information on state licensure and certification requirements, alternate routes and waivers, profiles of teacher preparation policies and practices in each state, and a summary of state efforts to improve teacher preparation and teacher quality. A comprehensive source of information about the Title II reporting system is available on the Web at http://www.title2.org.

Using the evidence

Recent studies demonstrate that teacher quality is the most powerful determinant of student achievement. Despite this, many state officials know too little about the performance of teacher preparation institutions in their state, pass-rate cut scores used to determine who is qualified to teach, or the number of practicing classroom teachers exempted from minimum state standards and allowed to teach.

> "[M]any state officials know too little about the performance of teacher preparation institutions in their state."

While Title II reports are not designed or intended to compare states or institutions of higher education in different states, both the institutional and state reports can be useful to policymakers in a variety of ways.

- They provide data about the strengths and weaknesses of preparation programs and state policies.
- They describe the routes to classroom teaching in the state and the standards employed to assess the knowledge and skills of those who seek to enter the teaching profession.
- They provide details about efforts to improve teacher quality, whether these are institutional reform initiatives or revisions to state policies governing recruitment, training, licensure and teacher support.

State officials should view these reports as resources to analyze and use in a collaborative effort with institutions and state agencies to ensure that every child in the state has a caring, competent and committed teacher in his or her classroom.

What can you do with this information?

A good starting point is to think about the Title II report card as a snapshot on the "status of teaching" in your state. It will not tell you everything you want to know, but the report opens the door to a broader understanding of the state system that should guarantee a quality teacher for every student in every classroom.

When you get the state Title II report, consider convening a working meeting to go over the report. Invite key figures from every campus with a teacher preparation program as well as the senior leaders of the state education and higher education agencies. If your state has a professional standards board with teacher licensure and certification responsibilities, that agency's leaders should take part as well.

Some states have found it helpful to create an ongoing P-16 council to maintain long-term focus on issues such as teacher quality. If your state has one of the Title II grants mentioned at the outset of this article, the senior managers of these state or school-university projects should be part of the group. In fact, all 31 state Title II projects received additional federal funds earlier this year to support P-16 efforts to improve teacher quality and accountability. These resources offer a chance to involve all the players in your state.

Title II report cards are a good start on stronger accountability for teacher quality. But they are not the end-all of the reform process. States and institutions of higher education have unique circumstances that ought to be considered when deciding what the report card's results mean and how to use them. In the end, the Title II reporting system will have come to nothing if the information it provides to the public and to policymakers is not reviewed, talked over and acted on.

Crowe was the first director of the Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants Program at the U.S. Department of Education. He now works as a consultant on teacher quality policy issues for ECS and other organizations.□

HIGHER EDUCATION MASTER PLANS GAINING GROUND

by John Borgen

Many legislatures require master plans for higher education to frame their states' higher education policies and outline the steps necessary to achieve policy goals. Whether by coincidence, convenience or deliberation, master planning for higher education did not escape state boards of regents, trustees or governors in the year 2000 as 16 states developed master plans for higher education. These 16 master plans, along with 12 others developed between 1996-99 and three more in 2001, are organized around three congruent themes — access, economic development and technology (specifically distance learning through electronic delivery).

These three issues are inextricably linked. State higher education governing and coordinating boards recognize the important role higher education plays in preparing the workforce and generating economic growth through research and development. Enhancing access to postsecondary education is, in part, a response to the demand for more people with greater skills. And, to expand access, higher education increasingly is relying on technology through "e-learning."

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Improving access

While a high school diploma may have been sufficient in earlier times, today's knowledge and technology-based economy requires a more highly skilled workforce. To meet these demands, states such as Arizona, Nevada and Texas are placing increasing emphasis on improving access to postsecondary education.

The report of the Governor's Task Force on Higher Education, *Arizona At Risk*, calls for the creation of Arizona College Education grants of $1,000 to supplement federal Pell grants at three levels. The Basic Level would target full-time community college students for the two years immediately following graduation from Arizona high schools. The Continuation Level would focus on students for the two years after they complete a transfer program at a community college. And the Achievement Level would be awarded to high school graduates attending Arizona's public or private universities for four years. This program would provide financial assistance for approximately 7,000 students initially.

Nevada anticipates a 100% increase in postsecondary enrollment between 2000 and 2010 and has drafted a new master plan. The plan calls for a strong need-based financial aid program beginning with $9 million and growing to $22 million by the end of the decade. Strategies employed to meet the increased demand include student participation in technology-mediated instruction, encouraging one or more private institutions to establish a campus in Nevada, and forming new public institutions or branch campuses if they meet the minimum threshold for sustaining adequate demand.

The first goal of the Texas Higher Education Plan, *Closing the Gaps by 2015*, is to raise the higher education participation rate from 5 to 5.7% of the state population by 2015. Achieving this will require enrolling an additional 500,000 students with significant increases in the participation rate of African Americans and Hispanics. To realize this increase, one strategy Texas plans to employ is to make its "recommended high school program" (college-preparatory courses) the standard curriculum in public high schools and the minimum requirement for admission to Texas public universities by 2008.

Workforce development

A state's economic vitality clearly is linked to its higher education system's ability to supply a skilled workforce that meets employment needs, and to support existing businesses and create new ones through research and development. To these ends, a major goal of the *Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education in Nebraska* is workforce development. The plan calls for incorporating workforce readiness competencies into the curriculum where needed and using employer advisory councils to identify necessary changes in program content or create new certificate or degree programs to meet evolving needs.

Another state looking at the centrality of workforce needs is South Carolina. Here, *The Strategic Plan for Higher Education in South Carolina* calls for the implementation of a research initiative to foster competitive, cutting-edge research that supports economic development.

Technology

Increasingly, states such as Iowa and North Carolina are looking to technology as a means of increasing access to postsecondary education through "e-learning" opportunities. *Investing in the Future*, the board of regents' strategic plan, urges a substantial increase in distance education enrollment and the evaluation of a differential tuition policy for distance education. Also, the strategic directions of *Long-Range Planning 2000-2005* developed by the University of North Carolina (UNC) Board of Governors call for the coordination of a comprehensive distance-education strategy and the creation of a UNC-wide data warehouse to simplify data collection and improve data retention.

With impending budget cuts likely in many states, it remains uncertain, however, if and how state higher education systems will be able to achieve the goals identified in their master plans. Because states can pass off higher education costs to other sources, such as tuition increases, these budgets often are among the first to be cut when times get tough.

For more information on state master plans, contact Borgen at 303-299-3619. Also look for an upcoming *ECS StateNote* on these issues on the ECS Web site (www.ecs.org).

Borgen is a research assistant in ECS State Services.□

"With impending budget cuts likely..., it remains uncertain... if and how state higher education systems will be able to achieve [their] goals."

LEADERSHIP IN THE STATES

by Katy Anthes

As states implement education policies aimed at improving accountability systems, teacher quality and governance structures, there is a key linchpin that dramatically affects those policies' success: the leadership of the individuals at the state, district and school levels. Though the issue of effective leadership is not new, states are revisiting it to ensure that education leaders have the skills they need for their roles in a system that is changing from service-oriented to results-oriented.

To complicate matters, most states are reporting shortages of candidates applying for principal positions, difficulties in finding qualified superintendents and problems defining the roles for leaders in this era of high-pressure accountability. For example, the California Commission on Teacher credentialing is reporting a 90% shortage of principals at the high school level and a 70% shortage at the elementary level for the 2001 school year. Also, a recent ECS-commissioned survey of superintendent search consultants found that the applicant pools for such positions are decreasing in both size and quality.

Leadership issues and questions

The four categories below show the questions that state policymakers most frequently ask — and should consider — when debating policies that affect school and district leadership effectiveness. State leaders examining which policies to alter or add should collect data within each category to determine the strategies that will best improve their state's ability to recruit, prepare and retain high-quality education leaders.

- **The Candidate Pool:** Does the state have enough candidates for principals and superintendents in the pipeline? Are there enough applicants to fill superintendent and principal positions in the state? Are the applicants qualified to fill the positions?

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- **Education and Professional Learning:** Are the state higher education institutions adequately preparing students for education leadership positions? Are students gaining the skills they need to be successful school and district leaders? Do institutions need to change their curriculum to meet the needs of 21st-century education leaders? Are current and new principals (and superintendents) receiving high-quality continuing education during their careers? Are there support structures in place to mentor new leaders as they begin their career?
- **Conditions of Practice:** Are principals and superintendents being paid properly? How many hours are principals and superintendents expected to work? How many hours do they work? Do principals and superintendents have the assistance they need to execute their priority job functions (instructional leadership)? What are the job expectations for each leadership role? Is it feasible to fill all those expectations?
- **Governance and Authority:** What is the governance structure of the state, district and local education system? Does this allow for effective leadership within each system? Do principals and superintendents have the authority they need to make decisions that allow them to implement their vision? Do the education leaders understand and "buy in" to their roles and responsibilities within the system?

State policy developments

Below are examples of some of the leadership issues states have recently addressed (not all were enacted).

- Establishing, adopting and implementing standards for school leaders (Arkansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia)
- Establishing performance-based contracts for principals (Alabama, Colorado)
- Developing alternative certification programs for administrators (Iowa, Alabama, Florida, Illinois)
- Dropping certain certification requirements needed to be a superintendent or other education administrator (Colorado, Hawaii, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Wyoming)
- Establishment of statewide leadership academies for school and district leaders (23 states have these)
- Increasing the continuing education requirements for current education leaders, mostly through requiring leaders to participate in the state leadership academy (see above).

For more information on the issue of school leadership, visit the ECS Leadership Issue Site at http://www.ecs.org/issues/leadership or contact Katy Anthes, ECS policy analyst, 303-299-3635 or kanthes@ecs.org.

Anthes is an ECS policy analyst focusing on leadership.

Education Leadership Policy Resources

- State Action for Education Leadership Project Policy and Practice Compendium (http://www.ccsso.org/edleadership.html)
- ECS Leadership Academy *StateNote* (*Statewide Leadership Academies: A 50-State Scan;* Leadership Issues Site — http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/26/93/2693.htm)
- ECS superintendency paper series (http://www.ecs.org/html/IssueSection.asp?issueid=158&s=Selected+Research+%26+Readings):
  - *Superintendent Leaders Look at the Superintendency, School Boards and Reform*
  - *The Superintendent Crisis: A Review by Search Consultants*
  - *Chief State School Officers, American Association of School Administrators and National School Boards Association View the Superintendent Applicant Crisis*
- ECS Leadership Issue Site (http://www.ecs.org/html/issue.asp?IssueID=158)

OHIO PARTNERSHIPS UNITE DISTRICTS, UNIVERSITIES

by Marga Torrence

Partnerships between schools or between school districts and universities are on the rise across the nation as states begin to look at education in a "P-16" context, that is, as an interconnected system spanning from preschool through college. Both districts and universities are in a unique position to help one another in influencing both K-12 and postsecondary education. Too often, however, the two have been on separate tracks.

The Education Commission of the States (ECS) is involved in an ongoing evaluation of school-university partnerships in Ohio. In 1998, the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation provided grants to five universities to establish partnerships with the state's 21 largest urban school districts to improve student learning. These partnerships are part of a larger Urban Initiative that the Cleveland-based foundation supports to improve learning opportunities for Ohio's urban students.

The foundation contracted with ECS to evaluate the development of the five partnerships over the grants' remaining three years. The first year of evaluation focuses on three partnerships: Kent State University, Ohio State University and the University of Cincinnati. The second year of evaluation focuses on the remaining two partnerships, Cleveland State University and the University of Toledo. The final year will involve a re-evaluation of all five partnerships and a final report to the Jennings Foundation.

Each evaluation assesses whether the partnership is reaching the potential of its chosen governance structure and identifies opportunities for strengthening that structure to increase student achievement and sustain the project. In some cases, the university is the center of the partnership; in others, the school districts drive the relationship. In all cases, the initial choice of the partnership design was made because of specific factors such as size of the districts, focus of the projects, prior relationships between the university and districts, etc.

Early findings

Preliminary findings point to strengths and barriers to success in the partnerships involved in the Urban Initiative. Strengths of the partnerships include:

- ☐ Emphasis on individual districts' needs
- ☐ Increased collaboration between the districts and universities
- ☐ Empowerment of urban teachers and sharing across the 21 urban districts, which share common problems and opportunities to reach their goals for both students and teachers.

Barriers to the partnerships include:

- ☐ District size and diversity — the districts varied from 10,000 students to 65,000 students
- ☐ Leadership turnover within the districts and schools
- ☐ Prior relationships between the university and individual school districts that may not have been mutual or may have involved districts and universities that were not geographically close to one another
- ☐ Lack of communication across the partnerships and time for teachers to meet or attend professional development.

The strengths and barriers have created areas of new opportunities, including: cross-partnership sharing of best practices, sharing and expanding each district's university partnerships, strengthening educators' ability to use data, extending support for the districts' work and encouraging a unified state role for Ohio's urban district issues. By defining the opportunities provided through the partnerships, the districts, universities, Ohio Department of Education and the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation can undertake the next steps toward achieving their common goal of improving education for Ohio's urban children.

Torrence is an ECS policy analyst.☐

by Lou Myers

SERVICE-LEARNING: WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE STATES

Service-learning, combining academic study with community service, is thriving in America. Through funds from the Corporation for National Service, almost every state now has resources for some level of a service-learning program, and policymakers are examining how service-learning can help increase student achievement and civic engagement, and decrease problems such as drop-out rates, school crime and violence. More than half of the states have made service-learning part of their education policy.

The Compact for Learning and Citizenship (CLC), the Education Commission of the States K-12 service-learning project, recently produced a 50-state policy scan, "Institutionalized Service-Learning in the 50 States." It provides a snapshot of where states are with institutionalizing service-learning into their public schools. The scan takes a hard-nosed approach to looking at policy at the state level. For each state, it examines whether the state has a policy with respect to service-learning in its:

- ☐ Constitution
- ☐ Statutes
- ☐ Codes or regulations
- ☐ State board of education regulations.

Analysis

The scan turned up the following information about service-learning in state policy:

- ☐ As of December 2000, 23 states make no mention of service-learning in any state policy. Most, however, do receive funds from the Corporation for National Service to implement programs through their state education departments.
- ☐ At least five states proposed legislation relating to service-learning in the 2000 legislative session, although none of the bills passed.
- ☐ Most policies about service-learning fall into these categories:
  - The state permits community-service or service-learning activities to be applied toward graduation requirements (Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Wisconsin).
  - Service-learning is a requirement for graduation (one state — Maryland).
  - Rules, regulations, creation or purpose of programs relating to service-learning exist (eight states — Arkansas, California, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Louisiana, Montana, Utah).

- The state encourages the use of service-learning as a mechanism for increasing student achievement and engagement (11 states — California, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Michigan, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, plus Washington, D.C.).
- Service-learning is included in state education standards (six states — Idaho, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Vermont).
- The state authorizes funding appropriations and the creation of service-learning activities and programs (six states — Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, Vermont).

New national efforts

Nationally, service-learning has been included in federal legislation being considered in both the House and the Senate. In the House, South Carolina Representative Lindsey Graham has introduced H.R. 1557, which would permit local education agencies to use funds made available under the innovative education program to support certain community-service programs.

In the Senate, Minnesota Senator Paul Wellstone has introduced the Hubert H. Humphrey Civic Education Act, S. 1238, the companion of which, the Paul Simon Civic Education Act, is expected to be introduced shortly in the House. Finally, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization being discussed in conference committee includes service-learning language in both versions of the bill. For the latest on federal legislation about service-learning, visit the State Education Agency K-12 Service-Learning Web site, www.seanetonline.org.

Myers is director of the Compact for Learning and Citizenship, part of ECS' Center for Learning and Citizenship. For more information, see www.ecs.org/clc.

Future State and District Actions

Assuring that students have the highest-quality education through service-learning requires a systems approach at many levels and full integration with already existing state and district priorities and actions. ECS' Compact for Learning and Citizenship has these recommendations for action at the state level:

- ☐ Associate service-learning with larger reform efforts, e.g., standards.
- ☐ Combine forces with state leaders to launch a public campaign about the kind of future your state's citizens want and how to get there.
- ☐ Create systems that assist local districts in monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the effectiveness of service-learning programs and activities.
- ☐ Designate a key state education agency staff person to coordinate statewide service-learning initiatives.
- ☐ Develop and support a statewide network of experienced service-learning educators.
- ☐ Work with school districts and teacher education institutions to develop and offer preservice and inservice training opportunities for teachers and administrators.
- ☐ Develop and disseminate written policies endorsing the integration of service-learning into the academic curriculum.

At the district level, recommendations include:

- ☐ Engage district stakeholders in committing to providing high-quality service-learning experiences for every student at every grade level to address students' academic, social, personal, civic and career development.
- ☐ Develop district-level policies that support service-learning, including numerous opportunities for teachers to improve classroom practice.
- ☐ Create an effective district "systems" approach to service-learning that includes establishing permanent staff positions, establishing mechanisms for teacher/practitioner development/exchange, building public awareness/support, etc.
- ☐ Connect service-learning to all key district initiatives that support academic achievement.

For more information about service-learning in K-12 schools and its relationship to state policy, contact CLC at 303-299-3644 or see the CLC Web site at www.ecs.org/clc. ☐

COMMUNITY COLLEGE ROLE GROWING

by Genevieve Hale

State legislatures faced drastically tighter budgets during their 2001 legislative sessions than they did just a year ago. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, about one-third of the states had budget shortfalls in fiscal year 2001 because of factors such as slower revenue growth, increased state spending and tax cuts. The near future looks worse with a U.S. recession looming on the horizon and 40 states reporting fiscal problems.

Because higher education has the ability to shift the cost to others through tuition and fee increases, as well as raise research funds and gifts, state legislators often cut higher education to balance state budgets. This leaves many public colleges and universities with no other alternative but to raise tuition significantly and cut costs. Indeed, this already has begun in states such as Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee and Wisconsin.

A National Education Association (NEA) survey on state legislative views on higher education found that despite the fact that higher education funding cuts are used as "budget balancers," many state legislators believe current state levels of funding for higher education are inadequate. State legislators feel higher education is important to:

- ☐ Strengthen and diversify the economy
- ☐ Prepare a high-skill, high-wage workforce
- ☐ Raise the population's education level, including preparing, training and supporting qualified elementary and secondary education professionals

Community colleges: A vital role

According to the NEA survey, legislators overall view community colleges as being the sector of higher education that is the most responsive to state needs for education and training and the most adept at quickly changing priorities.

One area where community colleges will play an increasingly important role is in teacher recruitment and preparation.

- ☐ **Maryland** recently approved the nation's first associate of arts teaching degree, permitting prospective teachers to take class credits at a community college that parallel the first two years of a baccalaureate program in teacher education. Students will be able to transfer to any state-approved public or private university offering education programs in elementary, secondary, special and early childhood education.
- ☐ In 1999, Great Basin College, a two-year college in Elko, **Nevada**, received $1.5 million from the legislature to offer select four-year degrees. The college granted its first bachelor's of arts degrees in elementary education in 2001.

Access

This past year, state legislators wrestled with questions such as how to reduce academic, transfer and articulation and financial barriers that limit individuals' opportunities to enter and succeed in college.

One of the hottest debates over access is merit-based versus need-based student financial aid. A growing number of states have implemented merit-based student aid programs that pay all or part of the college tuition of any student who meets achievement standards. These programs, however, are controversial because they divert limited funds from need-based scholarships, and it appears that the trend toward creating merit-based student aid programs will continue. Some interesting developments with respect to student financial aid in the states this past year include:

- **South Carolina** Governor Jim Hodges signed into law the South Carolina Education Lottery Act. Proceeds from the lottery are to be used to enhance education opportunities for South Carolina's students, including free tuition at state technical colleges and two-year public institutions.
- **California**'s newly expanded and revamped Cal Grants program enables students with good grades and financial need to receive grants that pay for tuition and fees at state public colleges and universities and up to $9,708 per year for California students attending private institutions. The program has won praise from national financial aid experts who like the fact that it concentrates on need while still maintaining a focus on merit and high school preparation. Nevertheless, this new program is being criticized because fewer students have received Cal Grants than during the previous year due to factors such as poor communication, lack of time to publicize the new program, bureaucracy, applicant mistakes, etc.

Governance

Other recent significant community college legislation concerned governance.

- **Florida** passed HB 2263, which alters Florida's education structure effective January 2003. SB 1162 accelerates the governance change and establishes a transition system to oversee the changes. Effective July 1, 2001, the Board of Regents and the State Board of Community Colleges were abolished and their functions transferred to the Florida Board of Education. By November 2001, the governor will appoint new boards of trustees for colleges and universities. The permanent Florida Board of Education, which will oversee education from kindergarten through graduate education, will be effective July 7, 2003. The governor will appoint new board members, and the board of education will appoint the commissioner of education.
- **West Virginia** passed Senate Bill 653, which creates a policy commission and transferred governance responsibilities from the two state governing boards to institutional boards, effective July 2001. Senate Bill 703 completes the transfer of powers, duties and responsibilities to the new boards. While Senate Bill 653 creates an independently accredited system of community and technical colleges, Bill 703 builds on that by establishing the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education to aid in the establishment and coordination of a strong system of community and technical education.

The bills outlined here are just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the types of community college legislation that went into effect in the states during the last legislative session. Some of the critical community college issues legislators will grapple with in the next legislative session will include funding, access, teacher preparation and workforce development. Many challenges lay ahead as the economy slows and as other policy priorities take precedence over higher education, but despite all that, community colleges will continue to receive attention in legislatures across the country.

For more information on community college issues, please visit the ECS Center for Community College Policy's Web site at www.communitycollegepolicy.org.

Hale is an ECS research associate with the Center for Community College Policy.

"Many challenges lay ahead as the economy slows and as other policy priorities take precedence over higher education, but ... community colleges will continue to receive attention in legislatures across the country."

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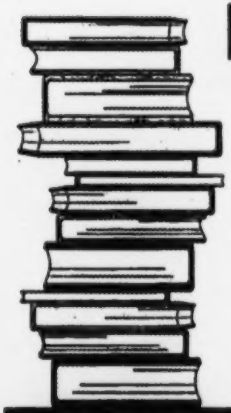

ECS IS MOVING!

As of December 18, 2001, ECS' new address is:

700 Broadway
Suite 1200
Denver, CO
80203-3460.

Phone numbers will remain the same.

Nothing is more critical to a child's ability to succeed in school and beyond than learning to read. Yet, as the White House noted recently: "There is a reading crisis in America." Only one in three of the nation's students leaves the 4th grade reading at or above the "proficient" level — and an alarming 68% of poor and minority students fall short of even the "basic" level.

Across the nation, childhood literacy is the focus of growing concern, interest and support. President Bush has made solving this problem and closing the achievement gaps a focus of his education reform plan. Numerous states are working to strengthen their students' reading skills. At the same time, research has produced a compelling body of evidence, as well as a growing consensus, about the best methods for teaching children to read. In short, the stage is set for significant advances toward the goal of ensuring that all children learn to read by the end of 3rd grade.

For these reasons, Nevada Governor Kenny Guinn has chosen literacy as the focus for his year as 2001-02 Education Commission of the States chairman. The ECS *Leading for Literacy* initiative has three main objectives:

- ☐ Educate policymakers about the literacy problem and the research on what to do about it
- ☐ Provide state leaders with the policy options, models and tools needed to tailor a plan to address the state's specific needs
- ☐ Help states create integrated action plans that can lead to significant improvement in reading.

ECS also is working in partnership with the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) to help develop public policy aimed at providing every child with the ability to read by the end of the 3rd grade. To support these and other efforts, ECS and AASA are establishing the Leading for Literacy Foundation. Funding is currently being sought to support the foundation's activities.

For more information on the *Leading for Literacy* initiative, see the ECS Web site, Projects & Centers section (http://www.ecs.org/initiatives/Guinn/GuinnInit_intro.htm).☐

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